

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Please cancel claims 1-56 without prejudice or disclaimer, and add new claims 57-81 as follows.

Claims 1-56 (Cancelled).

57. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide having a  $d_{90}$  less than or equal to 6.2  $\mu\text{m}$  as measured by CILAS.

58. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 57, having a  $d_{90}$  less than or equal to about 5.0  $\mu\text{m}$  as measured by CILAS.

59. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 58, having a  $d_{90}$  less than or equal to about 4.0  $\mu\text{m}$  as measured by CILAS

60. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 59, having a  $d_{90}$  less than or equal to about 3.0  $\mu\text{m}$  as measured by CILAS.

61. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 60, having a  $d_{90}$  less than or equal to 2.0  $\mu\text{m}$  as measured by CILAS.

62. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 57, further having a  $d_{99}$  less than or equal to 20  $\mu\text{m}$  as measured by CILAS.

63. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 62, further having a  $d_{99}$  less than or equal to about 15  $\mu\text{m}$  as measured by CILAS.

64. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 63, further having a  $d_{99}$  less than or equal to about 9  $\mu\text{m}$  as measured by CILAS.

65. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 64, further having a  $d_{99}$  less than or equal to about 5  $\mu\text{m}$  as measured by CILAS.

66. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 57, further having a  $d_{50}$  less than or equal to about 4.0  $\mu\text{m}$  as measured by CILAS.
67. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 66, further having a  $d_{50}$  less than or equal to about 2.0.  $\mu\text{m}$  as measured by CILAS.
68. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 67, further having a  $d_{50}$  less than or equal to about 1.5  $\mu\text{m}$  as measured by CILAS.
69. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 68, further having a  $d_{50}$  less than or equal to about 1.0  $\mu\text{m}$  as measured by CILAS.
70. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 57, wherein the particles are surface-treated with one or more surface-treatment agents.
71. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 70, wherein the surface-treatment agent is selected from: saturated or unsaturated fatty acids containing from 8 to 24 carbon atoms, metal salts of saturated or unsaturated fatty acids containing from 8 to 24 carbon atoms, and coupling agents.
72. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 71, wherein the saturated or unsaturated fatty acids are chosen from oleic acid, palmitic acid, stearic acid, isostearic acid, and lauric acid.
73. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 71, wherein the metal salts are chosen from ammonium stearate, magnesium stearate, magnesium oleate, zinc stearate, and zinc oleate.
74. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 71, wherein the coupling agents are chosen from organic silanes and titanates.

75. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 74, wherein the organic silanes are chosen from vinyltriethoxysilane, tri-(2-methoxyethoxy)vinylsilane, vinyltriacetyl silane, and aminosilane.
76. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 74, wherein the titanates are chosen from tetraisopropyltitanate and tetra-n-butyl-titanate.
77. (New) A process for preparing particulate natural magnesium hydroxide having a  $d_{90}$  less than or equal to 6.2  $\mu\text{m}$  as measured by CILAS, wherein brucite is ground in an aqueous suspension in the presence of at least one particulate grinding medium under conditions such that the energy input is in excess of about 20 kWh/tonne.
78. (New) A polymeric composition comprising a polymer and a filler material comprising particulate natural magnesium hydroxide having a  $d_{90}$  less than or equal to 6.2  $\mu\text{m}$  as measured by CILAS, and optionally one or more other particulate inorganic materials.
79. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 57, having an ISO brightness of at least about 89.
80. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 79, having an ISO brightness of at least about 91.
81. (New) Particulate natural magnesium hydroxide according to claim 80, having an ISO brightness of at least about 93.